

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED L.)
SUBJECT: ATHERTON'S ARRIVAL STATEMENT, FEB. 20, 1978

DEPT. FOR NEA; USIA FOR INA, JERUSALEM FOR ATHERTON PARTY

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ARRIVAL STATEMENT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
STATE ATHERTON AT LOD AIRPORT, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20 AT 1845:

WELL IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO RETURN TO ISRAEL WHERE MRS. ATHERTON
AND I HAVE SO MANY OLD FRIENDS OF SUCH LONG STANDING. I INTERRUPTED
MY MISSION HERE JUST A LITTLE OVER TWO WEEKS AGO TO GO BACK FOR THE
VISIT OF PRESIDENT SADAT. WE ARE NOW LOOKING FORWARD TO THE VERY
IMPORTANT VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.
PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE ASKED ME TO RETURN AT THIS
TIME TO CONTINUE THE EFFORTS THAT I WAS ENGAGED IN IN SEEKING TO
HELP THE PARTIES ADVANCE THE PEACE PROCESS. I THINK MY RETURN AT
THIS TIME UNDERLIES THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE UNITED STATES ATTACHES
TO CONTINUITY IN THE PEACE PROCESS. CONTINUITY WHICH I AM SURE
THE PARTIES THEMSELVES ALSO SUPPORT. I LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING
WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN AND HIS COLLEAGUES TOMORROW TO GET
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DOWN TO BUSINESS. THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WILL BE TO
CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO OVERCOME THE DIFFERENCES ON THE
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPALS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT
WITH THE VIEWS OF THE THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IN MIND. AFTER OUR
TALKS HERE I WILL THEN GO ON TO CAIRO AND CONTINUE THIS EFFORT.

Q: (INAUDIBLE)

ATHERTON: WELL, I THINK THE TALKS WE HAD WITH PRESIDENT SADAT HAVE GIVEN US A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE EGYPTIAN POSITION AND I WILL SIMPLY PICK UP WHERE I LEFT OFF AND CONTINUE THE PROCESS. IF THERE ARE STILL DIFFICULTIES AS I'VE SAID BEFORE BUT WE HAD MADE SOME PROGRESS AND I THINK WE SIMPLY HAVE TO KEEP ON WORKING TO MAKE FURTHER PROGRESS.

Q: HOW FAR ARE WE FROM THE DECLARATION IN PRINCIPAL?

ATHERTON: I REALLY WOULDN'T LIKE TO TRY AND PUT A TIME PERIOD ON IT. WE WILL CONTINUE THE WORK (INAUDIBLE INTERRUPTION)... I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER BEFORE I EVEN START MY TALKS HERE NOT TO GET INTO THE DETAILS OF WHERE WE STAND.

Q: WHAT ARE CHANCES TO GET KING HUSSAIN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EFFORTS?

ATHERTON: WELL, AS YOU KNOW ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF COURSE IS TO TRY AND BROADEN THE NEGOTIATIONS. I WOULDN'T WANT TO PREJUDGE THAT AT THIS STAGE BUT CERTAINLY ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES IS TO PROVIDE A BASIS IN THE DECLARATION FOR BROADENING THE NEGOTIATIONS SO OTHER PARTIES INCLUDING JORDAN COULD JOIN. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
LEWIS

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